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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004156

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: NINEWA: KDP VICE GOVERNOR VISITS PROMINENT SHAMMAR SHEIKH

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Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Greg D'elia for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

This is a Ninewa Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) message.

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Summary  
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[¶](#)1. (C/REL AUS, GBR, CAN) Ninewa Vice Governor and provincial Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) leader Khasro Goran fielded complaints December 17 from local tribal leaders in a rare visit to prominent Shammar sheikh Abdullah Al Yawr's house. The Shammar, a politically and economically powerful Arab tribe, complained of harassment by Kurdish security forces and discrimination by Kurdish provincial officials, and condemned potential efforts to divide the province (a reference to Article 140). Goran listened to the Arab leaders' grievances, responded that the Kurds want equal rights for all groups and warned of deteriorating provincial security. The meeting produced no new agreements but marked a useful opening for dialogue between the two groups. End summary.

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Shammar Feel Oppressed, Want Unified Ninewa  
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[¶](#)2. (C/REL AUS, GBR, CAN) Goran on December 17 visited Abdullah's house near Rabi'a for the first time since 2004. Speaking for a group of 40 prominent Shammar leaders, Abdullah said his tribe felt oppressed, ignored and discriminated against by the Kurdish-dominated Provincial Government in Mosul. He called for Ninewa to remain unified, with Kurds living peacefully with Arabs. If the "Kurdish parties" were not willing to agree to a fair settlement that maintained Ninewa's integrity and the rights of Arabs, Abdullah said the province's Arab population would break Kurdish control "like a rock smashing a glass." Individual Shammar complaints included the Iraqi Army's arrest in Ninewa of Sunni Arabs who were allegedly detained in Kurdish areas, lack of local services, prohibitions on sick Arabs receiving treatment in Kurdish hospitals, and encroachment of Kurdish security forces into Arab areas.

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Kurds Were Victims Before, but Say They Seek Justice  
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¶3. (C/REL AUS, GBR, CAN) Goran listened to Abdullah's complaints, as well as the specific allegations of Kurdish mistreatment of individual Shammari, before laying out his own vision for Kurdish-Arab relations in Ninewa. Goran said that, although the Kurds were victims of Saddam-era injustices, they sought equal rights for all groups in a peaceful, transparent, and modern Iraq. He said Barzani ordered him to restrain Kurdish encroachment in any form. "If someone forces you to open a Kurdish school in your village, come cut my head off," Goran said.

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Violence Mentioned, but Motivations Differ  
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¶4. (C/REL AUS, GBR, CAN) Both Goran and Abdullah referred to the possibility of violence in the province. Goran said Kurds would fight to leave Iraq if their rights were not protected, in contrast to Abdullah's threat to use violence to maintain Arab rights in a unified Iraq. While the men agreed ethnic and racial issues were not driving Kurdish-Arab tensions in the region, Goran said the primary issue facing Ninewa is provincial security. Abdullah disagreed, stating that the biggest potential driver of violence was an attempt to break the integrity of Nineva province (a clear allusion to implementation of Article 140 in the region). Goran concluded by extending an invitation to Abdullah to meet Kurdish Regional Government Prime Minister Massoud Barzani for talks on developing a cooperative relationship between Kurds and Arabs.

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Comment  
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¶5. (C/REL AUS, GBR, CAN) Although neither Goran nor Abdullah seemed fully comfortable in the meeting, both were happy to publicize it among their own communities. Despite Goran's initial reluctance to attend this meeting, he brought along

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Kurdish media representatives. Similarly, Abdullah chose to speak in front of his tribesmen. Both men referred to earlier eras of better Kurdish-Arab ties and mutual assistance. It is unlikely that direct political movement will come from the meeting, but it reinforced the Provincial Government's willingness to listen to its citizens and set the stage for continued dialogue between Kurds and Arabs over security, minority rights and disputed territories.

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